

WHAT'S YOUR EXCUSE?

Seven Reasons Parents Give for Not Taking Children for Their Shots

1. My baby is healthy. There's no reason to take him/her to the doctor.

Just because your baby is healthy now does not mean he or she won't get childhood diseases. Only immunizations can prevent diseases such as measles, mumps, polio, and diphtheria. Some of these diseases can be a serious threat to your baby.

2. My baby won't get the measles. Nobody gets it anymore.

Failure to immunize leads to new outbreaks of disease. In 1989-91, a measles epidemic resulted in more than 55,000 reported cases, 11,000 hospitalizations, and more than 120 deaths. Half of these deaths were in young children.

3. Childhood diseases aren't serious.

Vaccine-preventable diseases are potentially fatal. Tetanus kills 3 of 10 people it strikes. Diphtheria kills 1 of 10. Polio, pertussis, measles, mumps, rubella (German measles), hepatitis B, and spinal meningitis are also deadly but preventable.

4. I can't take the time off work to take my baby to the doctor.

Taking the time now to immunize your children can save you much more time later if your child becomes ill. Childhood illnesses such as measles can put a child in bed for weeks—or even in the hospital.

5. I can't afford to go to the doctor.

Most private and public health plans pay for childhood immunizations. If you have no regular health care provider, call the free hotline to locate the nearest place to get life-protecting shots. The number is 1-800-232-2522 (English) or 1-800-232-0233 (Spanish).

Vaccines save money in the long run.

- A child with a preventable disease can cost parents 30 times more than the vaccine.
- For every \$1 spent on childhood vaccines, an average of \$10 to \$14 is saved in future medical care.

6. I'll take them for shots when they're old enough for school.

- Children need 80 percent of their vaccines by the age of 2. Nearly one of four of America's 2-year-olds lack one or more recommended vaccinations.
- Most schools will not accept children who do not have all their shots. Save trouble later by keeping your infants and toddlers up to date on their shots.

7. My doctor didn't tell me my baby needed shots.

It's up to you to make sure your child is protected. Your doctor may forget to discuss shots with you. Keep a record of your child's shots in a safe place. Bring it with you to every health care visit. Ask your doctor or other health care provider to look at the record and tell you if your baby needs shots.

If shots are needed at a later date, write it down. Make an appointment, and be sure to keep it.

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